

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7790

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 0571

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, CH, US

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRC AMBASSADOR WEI-PAO-SHAN

REFS: A) STATE 5740

B) YAOUNDE 4267

C) YAOUNDE 4235

1. SUMMARY: DURING FAREWELL DINNER GIVEN BY EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND DELEGATE-GENERAL POERSCHMANN, AMBASSADOR SPIRO WAS SEATED NEXT TO PRC AMBASSADOR WEI PAO-SHAN. CONVERSATION TOUCHED ON CHOU EN LAI'S DEATH, FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON'S FORTHCOMING VISIT, AND HAN HSU, DEPUTY CHIEF OF PRC LIAISON OFFICE IN WASHINGTON, END SUMMARY.

2. I HAD HAD PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH CHINESE AMB, BUT NONE AS LONG OR AS WELL INTERPRETED AS THIS ONE, PARTLY DUE TO NEW INTERPRETER FROM PRC EMBASSY WHO, UNLIKE PREDECESSORS, GAVE GLIMMER OF SMILE WHENEVER I ASKED TOUCHY QUESTION. WEI EVADED ANSWERING SUCH BY REPEATING PREVIOUS ANSWER OR MAKING IRRELEVANT COMMENT. WHEN WIFE OF GURC MINISTER OF HOUSING AND EQUIPMENT, ON MY OTHER SIDE, DISCUSSED CHINESE MEDICAL TEAM WITH HIM, I COMMENTED ON PUBLISHED REFERENCE BY CHIEF OF TEAM TO NORMAN BETHUEN AS "FAMOUS INTERNATIONAL DOCTOR". I SAID AMERICAN BETHUEN WELL KNOWN IN US, BUT GOT NO RESPONSE.

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3. TO MY REMARK THAT I HAD READ ABOUT CHANGE OF ACTING PREMIERS,

WEI REPEATED HIS RESPONSE TO MY CONDOLENCES, EXPRESSED AT EARLIER SOCIAL GATHERING: THE DEATH OF CHOU EN LAI WAS VERY PAINFUL FOR CHINESE PEOPLE AND THEY APPRECIATE CONDOLENCES. HE INDICATED HE KNEW OF MY PERSONAL HIGH REGARD FOR PRC LEADERSHIP FROM MY BOOK, "POLITICS AS THE MASTER SCIENCE: FROM PLATO TO MAO," WHICH, IN RESPONSE TO MY KIDDING HIM ABOUT HIS UNDERSTANDING OF ENGLISH, HE INDICATED HE HAD BEEN WORKING AT READING.

4. UPON MY MENTION OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORTHCOMING NIXON TRIP, HE ASKED WHETHER I WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE. I WAS AND CALLED IT HISTORIC. HE AGREED AND SAID THAT INVITATION WAS INTENDED TO MARK ANNIVERSARY.

5. WHEN I MENTIONED THAT I HAD MET HAN HAU, DEPUTY CHIEF OF PRC LIAISON OFFICE IN WASHINGTON A NUMBER OF TIMES, HIS FACE LIT UP, HE CALLED HAN HAU A PERSONAL FRIEND, AND MENTIONED THAT HSU HAD BEEN CHIEF OF PROTOCOL IN PEKING.

6. IN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH MRS. SPIRO, WEI ALLOWED THAT HE HAS FOUR CHILDREN, WITH YOUNGEST IN GRADE SCHOOL, OLDEST AT UNIVERSITY.

7. COMMENT. WHILE MERELY CORRECT WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN YAOUNDE, WEI HAS RECENTLY BEEN WARMING UP WITHOUT BECOMING EXACTLY EFFUSIVE. THIS DINNER WAS ATTENDED ALSO BY TWO GURC MINISTERS AND EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR, AND HE TREATED ALL WITH FINE UNPARTIALITY. SPIRO

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